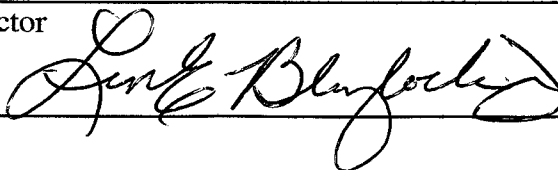


For: All STO Employees

Arkansas State Outreach Strategic Plan

Approved by: State Executive Director



1 Overview

A Background

According to the most recent Civil Rights Compliance Review, Arkansas had no State Outreach Strategic Plans on file in the County Offices. It was also notated that all Employees are not reviewing the Plan.

B Purpose

This notice is being issued to ensure that all County Offices Employees are aware of the contents of the Arkansas State Outreach Strategic Plan and that they are aware of their responsibilities regarding outreach.

2 Information

Our goal is to increase the participation of the underserved, including limited resource farmers, in FSA programs, with special emphasis on those who are socially disadvantaged or members of racial minority groups.

3 Action

County Offices shall:

- Ensure that all County Office Employees review the Arkansas State Outreach Strategic Plan.
- Each Employee should sign the attached form after reviewing the Outreach Strategic Plan.
- Each County Office should return the attached form completed. There should be one form submitted per County Office. **Return this form to the State Office by 12-03-04.**
- File a copy in accordance with 25-AS

4 Contact

Contact Rhonda O'Guinn by phone (501-301-3018) or by e-mail (Rhonda.oguinn@ar.usda.gov) if any questions arise about this notice.

Disposal Date

September 30, 2005
11-15-04

Distribution

All County Offices

ARKANSAS

STATE OUTREACH STRATEGIC PLANNING

Fiscal Year 2005

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

To enhance the historical mission of the FSA programs in an effort to ensure that all underserved farmers and ranchers have equal and timely access to FSA commodity, farm loan, conservation, environmental, emergency assistance, and domestic and international food assistance programs and information. That all are treated equitably with dignity and respect, and are encouraged and assisted in acquiring and operating farming and ranching business.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS:

To effectively achieve our vision and mission, the following attributes express our guiding principals:

Customer Service...

- Listen to customer needs,
- Respect and Dignity,
- Honesty, integrity, and impartiality,
- Responsibility and accountability.

Quality and Innovation...

- Be creative,
- Proactive, not reactive,
- Paradigm of change,
- Be committed,
- Promote outreach.

Duty to suppliers and Corporate Citizenship...

- Improve quality of processed commodities,
- Provide fair and equal treatment,
- Issue payments timely,
- Establish partnerships

Protecting the environment...

- Improve environmental quality,
- Protect resources,
- Provide funding,
- Protect public health.

STAKEHOLDERS:

Stakeholders are defined as anyone who has a stake in how well the organization achieves its mission. The following have been identified as stakeholders:

- County Committee Members,
- Farmers and Ranchers,
- Farmer advocates,
- Land Grant Universities
- Non-profit community- based organizations,
- Faith-based organizations,
- Farm workers,
- Unions,
- Other leaders,
- Tribal, state, and local government entities.

STAKEHOLDERS' EXPECTATIONS:

Expectations are those things that the Stakeholders expect from the organization. Identified expectations are:

- Cooperation,
- Build relationships,
- Partnerships,
- Consistency - truthfulness,
- Information.

CRITICAL ISSUES:

Issues that may affect ability to deliver programs and accomplish the mission are:

- Cultural understanding and differences,
- Diversity in employment and programs,
- Insufficient budgets,
- Office closings,
- Inadequate staffing,
- Low-farm prices,
- Program limitations,
- Barriers to helping the underserved,
- Language barrier.

KEYS TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS:

Issues identified that are key factors in achieving the success of delivering our programs and accomplishing the mission are:

- Positive working environment,
- Training- both internal and external,
- Partnershipping with community-based organizations,
- Partnershipping with land grant universities,
- Building support to increase programs,
- Creative outreach ideas and solutions,
- Effective communication.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION PLANS:

GOALS 1: Each County Office in the State will develop and maintain a comprehensive profile of the farmers and ranchers in their service area.

OBJECTIVES: To determine and increase the number of Small Limited Resource, Socially Disadvantaged, and Underserved farmers and ranchers participating in programs and to include their names and addresses in FSA Systems.

Identify cultural and language needs.

Develop a tracking system to measure the progress of services and program participation to the underserved.

ACTION PLAN:

- A. Identify the farmers in each county by size (number), race, gender, age and type of production.
- B. Develop a list of media used by the farming community and creative ways to use the media, such as video, signs, and other forms of public campaigns.
- C. Develop a name and address file of all Community Based Organizations, Farm Advocates, Tribal Governments and other community leadership that is working with the underserved farmers and ranchers.

- D. Develop a list of agencies that we need to do referrals for our customers, such as HUD, food stamps, health, financial counselors, and other groups that work with farmers in the county.
- E. Develop production, marketing and processing information for use by county farmers and ranchers to help them increase their income.

GOAL 2:

Ensure all customers have fair and equal access and are provided respect and dignity in the delivery of FSA programs and services, especially the underserved.

OBJECTIVES:

Identify the needs of the underserved customers.

Identify barriers or obstacles preventing fair and equal access to and participation in FSA programs and services by the underserved.

Increase membership of the County Committee to the underserved so that it is similar to the population make-up of the county as listed in the profile.

ACTION PLAN:

- A. Develop a means to efficiently and effectively address the needs of the customers.
- B. Provide cultural sensitivity training.
- C. Establish focus groups with partners to identify the needs of diverse customers.
- D. Identify barriers.
- E. Give priority consideration.
- F. Maximize financial and technical assistance to the underserved farmers and ranchers and execute vigorous outreach efforts, with the assistance and cooperation of partner organizations.

- G. Provide our customers with accurate and timely information to enable them to best utilize our programs to meet their needs.

GOAL 3:

Each County Office will develop a comprehensive communication plan to ensure they conduct outreach to the underserved.

OBJECTIVES:

Provide our customers with language friendly information on our programs and services.

ACTION PLAN:

- A. Develop information forming focus groups of interested parties in each county. These would be partnerships with Arkansas Land & Farm Development Corporation (ALFDC), University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), Advocates, Tribal Governments, Faith-Based organizations, and any other interested individuals.
- B. Develop effective outreach meeting agendas and demonstrations in conducting outreach meetings and having the active participation of the community.
- C. Assist others in obtaining information on different cultures, how to use that cultural awareness, and how to build this knowledge into the outreach plan and meetings.
- D. Help develop educational materials so the employees can spot program barriers and to make or recommend effective and efficient changes to remove the barriers timely.
- E. Develop and implement a complaint friendly system. This system can be used to improve outreach efforts and successfully solve problems before they become EO complaints.
- F. Cross training should provided on all USDA programs, and Title VI Training for all new field, state, and Service Center employees on an annual basis..
- G. Alleviate the existence of language and other barriers between Agency personnel and our customers.
- H. Disseminate information through partner organizations.

- I. Give Priority consideration to underserved communities in decisions for location or closing of full service or satellite centers.
- J. Develop a reporting system that will allow for accurate and timely reporting of all outreach activity and efforts from the County Office, through the District Office, to the State Office so it can be used to assist in developing the State Outreach Report to the National Office.

REVIEW/REVISE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Due to the dynamic nature of economic, social, political, technological, and other factors; planning must be done on a continual basis. This plan will be reviewed at least quarterly and revised when changing conditions dictate.

Arkansas State Outreach Strategic Plan

Reference: Arkansas Notice AO-119

Return to: Arkansas State FSA Office

Attn: **Rhonda O'Guinn**

County	State & County Code
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By signing below, you are stating that you have reviewed the Arkansas State Outreach Strategic Plan and that you are aware of your responsibilities, as an FSA Employee, regarding Outreach.

Name	Position	Date Signed

Comments:

Contact Information	Name	Phone Number
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